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**Research Materials/Source Documents
HERITAGE**

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Off we go, into the wild blue yonder...

Air Force song zoomed to top ten

by Capt. Milford A. Gutridge
28th Air Division
Tinker AFB, Okla.

More than 700 manuscripts had arrived for the Army Air Corps song committee in Washington by May 1939. Marilla A. McDill, Madeline D. Tinker and the other committee members were becoming discouraged.

"You can't force Army songs," offered Col. Edmund L. Gruber, composer of "The Caissons Go Rolling Along." "When you find a song you like, it will come from a young flier who has the feel of flying in his bones and knows the thrill and the glamour of the Air Corps," he said.

Thirteen months earlier Liberty magazine responded to the Corps' need for a song by offering a \$1,000 prize to the composer of the most stirring theme. In spite of this carrot and the support of Loew's theaters and popular singer Kate Smith, results had been dismal. The committee set June 30 as the contest closing date.

Two days before the contest ended, the Army's chief of information, Col. Harrison H.C. Richards, phoned committee member Mildred A. Yount.

"There is a composer and his wife in my office, and I wish you would see them," said the colonel to Mrs. Yount. "He has written a song and wants to tell you about it. Please see them and take care of this for me."

The committee had a rule that songs had to be submitted as manuscripts. It did not entertain auditions. However, Mrs. Yount reluctantly agreed to special consideration for Robert Crawford, as he and his wife had flown to Washington from New York. The composer had written the song in two hours as he flew

his private plane from New York to his home in Connecticut. Then he made a recording, which he presented to Mrs. Yount. To comply with the rules, he scribbled out a manuscript on the spot — before the miffed committee woman.

Nonetheless, the committee like this hastily prepared work and provided recording of it and others to informal gatherings of airmen for their vote.

A few weeks later, the committee presented the song and the poll results — 86 percent perference — to Chief of the Air Corps Gen. Henry "Hap" Arnold, along with a recommendation that Mr. Crawford's song be adopted as the official Air Corps song.

General Arnold approved the choice almost immediately. From that day, "The Air Corps Song" gained more and more popularity, not only among airmen, but also among the American public.

In November 1942 it reached third among radio audiences. By the time World War II had drawn Mr. Crawford into the Air Corps to fly transports.

In 1946, the year before the Army Air Corps became the Air Force, he returned to his chosen career as an associate professor in the University of Miami music school. He had attained the rank of major and became a lieutenant colonel in the Reserve. He died in 1961 at age 62.

"He was truly an amazing man," said his widow, Hester. "He was bright on all subjects, but still was a most humble person. He was continually frustrated, with his sights on a distant star, and never good enough from his perfectionist point of view."

The song written by Mr. Crawford for the Army Air Corps is still used as the Air Force Song.

The U.S. Air Force Song

*Off we go, into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high, into the sun
Here we come, zooming to meet our thunder,
At 'em boys, give 'er the gun.
Down we dive, spouting our flame from under,
Off with one, hell of a roar.
We live in fame, or go down in flame,
For, nothing can stop the U.S. Air Force.*

*Here's a toast, to the host, of those who love the
vastness of the sky.
To a friend, we'll send a message of his brother men
who fly.
We drink to those, who give their all of old,
Then down we roar to score the rainbow's pot of gold.
Here's a toast, to the host of men we boast,
The U.S. Air Force.*



(U.S. Air Force photo by SrA. Steven Knop)

THIS WILL BRING BACK A FEW MEMORIES AND MAYBE A TEAR OR TWO !

REMEMBER WHEN...*They were playing our songs!*

1943

"Amor"
 "Besame Mucho"
 "Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer"
 "Do Nothin' Till You Hear from Me"
 "Don't Get Around Much Anymore"
 "Don't Sweetheart Me"
 "A Gay Ranchero"
 "Goodbye, Sue"
 "Holiday for Strings"
 "How Many Hearts Have You Broken"
 "I Couldn't Sleep a Wink Last Night"
 "I Had the Craziest Dream"
 "I'll Be Seeing You"
 "In My Arms"
 "It's Love, Love, Love"
 "(It Seems to Me) I've Heard That Song Before"
 "Let's Get Lost"
 "A Lovely Way to Spend an Evening"
 "Mairzy Doats"
 "My Heart Tells Me"
 "My Shining Hour"
 "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning"
 "Oklahoma!"
 "People Will Say We're in Love"
 "Pistol Packin Mama"
 "Shoo-Shoo Baby"
 "Speak Low"
 "Star Eyes"
 "Sunday, Monday or Always"
 "The Surrey with the Fringe on Top"
 "Take It Easy"
 "Taking a Chance on Love"
 "They're either Too Young or Too Old"
 "Tico Tico"
 "Walking the Floor Over You"
 "What Do You Do in the Infantry"
 "You Keep Coming Back Like a Song"
 "You'll Never Know"

1944

"Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive"
 "All of a Sudden"
 "Candy"
 "Don't Fence Me In"
 "Down in the Valley"
 "Evalina"
 "Dream"
 "Going My Way"
 "Holiday for Strings"
 "How Blue the Night"
 "I Dream of You"
 "I Hear Music"
 "I Love You"
 "I Should Care"
 "I'll Get By"
 "I'll Walk Alone"
 "I'm making Believe"
 "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby"
 "It Could Happen to You"
 "Jealous Heart"
 "Lili Marlene"
 "Long Ago and Far Away"
 "My Heart Tells me"
 "Right as the Rain"
 "Roll Me Over"
 "Rum and Coca-Cola"
 "San Fernando Valley"
 "Saturday Night Is the Loneliest Night of the Week"
 "Sentimental Journey"
 "Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year"
 "Swinging on a Star"
 "Till Then"
 "Time Waits for No One"
 "The Trolley Song"
 "Twilight Time"
 "You Always Hurt the One You Love"

1945

"All of My Life"
 "Along the Navajo Trail"
 "Aren't You Glad You're You"
 "Autumn Serenade"
 "Chicery Chick"

"Close as Pages in a Book"
 "Cruising Down the River"
 "Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief"
 "Dream (When You're Feeling Blue)"
 "For Sentimental Reasons"
 "Give Me the Simple Life"
 "I Can't Begin to Tell You"
 "I should Care"
 "I Wish I Knew"
 "If I Loved You"
 "I'll Be Yours"
 "I'll Close My Eyes"
 "I'm Beginning to See the Light"
 "It Might As Well Be Spring"
 "It's a Grand Night for Singing"
 "It's Been a Long, Long Time"
 "J'Attendrai"
 "June Is Bustin' Out All Over"
 "Just a Little Fond Affection"
 "Laura"
 "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow"
 "The More I See You"
 "My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time"
 "O What It Seemed to Be"
 "On the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe"
 "(You Came Along) From Out of No-where"
 "Seems Like Old Times"
 "Symphony"
 "That's for Me"
 "There, I've Said It Again"
 "While the Angelus Was Ringing"
 "You'll Never Walk Alone"

AND DON'T FORGET...

"Tuxedo Junction"
 "In the Mood"
 "The Jersey Bounce"
 "Pennsylvania 6-5000"
 "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree"
 "White Cliffs of Dover"
 ""Jim"
 "He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings"

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